

## Lent is a time of reflection

I think we know what we mean by this word *reflection*.

We read the Scriptures, pray alone, attend Lenten services, special lunches or weekly study sessions, and give some thought to an excess in our lives (the tradition of giving up something for Lent).

But a reflection can also be spending a little time each day thinking about exactly the same thing for forty days.

And my Lenten reflection this year is from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's great theological resource, *Aids to Reflection* (1825).

Coleridge was a great English poet (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*), but he was also an important Anglican theologian, and it is in this latter capacity I am using a piece of his writing for my Lenten reflection.

Coleridge wrote:

**He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church (denomination) better than Christianity, and end in loving himself (his own peace) better than all.**

This sentence has haunted me for forty years, because I often find myself loving my church better than Christianity, if Christianity means the sum of all the other churches and sects.

Our Father's house has within it many mansions, some of which I am incapable of entering.

But in the last decade or two with the development of social media (fake news, constant lying, inordinate boasting) I have begun to notice that Coleridge asks me to love *truth* first of all.

And this Lent I am thinking about *truth*, together with its trusty sidekicks' *honesty* and *modesty*.

I am reflecting on them.

Thanks be to God.

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